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[Grape Jelly - 9-21-84]

Job came by last night & announced that the Dubernick family woodcutting operation would be arriving at Elddale on Saturday morning at 8 AM - i.e. - Co matin. Excellent. I woke up at 7:30 AM and got up immediately so that I would be fully prepared for the visit. I am. It is now 8:55 AM and no sign of the crew. John ^{now} works for the glass company at Heart Lake and will have to work there until about 1 P.M. A chilly morning - below 50° inside when I woke up and so I decided to turn on the Kerosene heater. In preparation for the woodcutters' arrival, I have made a large pot of espresso coffee. Also this morning, I made some tomato sauce out of about 25 tomatoes that WSP gave me yesterday. I just can not keep ahead of his garden & so instead of either saying no to his question - "Do you need any more tomatoes?" - or instead of giving them to someone else or allowing them to spoil, I have made a very nice tomato sauce - cube the tomatoes & put ^{with} a small quantity (1 cup for 25 tomatoes) of water in a large pot and boil for about ten minutes. Salt, pepper and no less than two tablespoons of dried basil. Yesterday (9-21-84) I made two pints of grape jelly from WSP's grapes - the vine was given to WSP by DWP some years ago and yesterday when I arrived at the Golf Course, WSP said: "There are some grapes out there." - which meant - "Go & pick some or all of them and make some grape jelly." WSP got very involved with the currant jelly operation and knew that all he would have to do is drop a heavy hint about the grapes and I would pick up the ball and run with it, so to speak. I did.

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There were three or four textbook perfect clusters of grapes - dark blue with a frosty gray sheen. The remainder of them (there was not a large quantity there) were somewhat un-bountiful in appearance: 4 or 5 grapes on what had been a full bunch but which did not develop into a full bunch. I'm sure that there is a very accurate term for such grapes but I do not know it. At any rate, S.K.P., Master Jelly Maker, went about the process with considerable assurance. In no time I had the two quarts of mashed grapes on the stove and boiling. As they boiled, they became more and more beautiful. The thin, watery purple beginning became deeper & deeper intense, until, at the end, it was a magnificent shiny deep purple/red. Curiously, it seemed to have all the intensity and force of blood gurgling from the veins and arteries of a freshly butchered animal (I must be recalling the butchering session at the Musée (Homestead) that was carried out under W.A.R.'s direction). I found two ^{new} golf course ball washer clothes and sewed them together ^{on W.A.R.'s sewing machine} and made a jelly bag and then collected up my jelly operation and returned here and put the grape pulp/juice/seeds into the jelly bag and hung it up. In less than an hour I had two pints of Grape Jelly - one of them I will give to DWP for Christmas and the other I will give to WSP for Christmas. They are the two who should enjoy ^{in mid-winter} the first annual grape harvest at the Musée (Homestead). Last night & again Co matin, I put wax on the top of the jar & so all is "signed & sealed."